

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 SSO-00 NSCE-00 INRE-00 PM-04

NSC-05 SP-02 SS-15 DODE-00 ACDA-07 CIAE-00 INR-07

NSAE-00 /061 W

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O 141739Z MAR 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 9302

INFO AMEMBASSY KINSHASA IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L BRUSSELS 2452

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, CG, AO, BE

SUBJECT: BORDER ATTACK ON ZAIRE: BELGIAN MILITARY ASSISTANCE

REF: (A) BRUSSELS 2417 (B) STATE 56057 (C) STATE 55229

(D) KINSHASA 2214

1. WE MET AFTERNOON MARCH 14 WITH FOREIGN MINISTRY DIRECTOR GENERAL VANDEN BLOOCK AND DIRECTOR AFRICAN AFFAIRS (LE BRUN) AND MADE DETAILED APPROACH ALONG LINES REFTELS B AND C. AMBASSADOR VANDEN BLOOCK CONFIRMED THAT PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS, AFTER CONSULTING WITH FOREIGN MINISTER AND DEFENSE MINISTER, DECIDED TO RESPOND POSITIVELY AND RAPIDLY TO MOBUTU'S REQUEST FOR MILITARY ASSISTANCE. TWO BELGIAN C-130'S LOADED WITH MATERIEL FOR FAZ HAVE NOT DEPARTED BELGIUM PENDING RECEIPT OF SPANISH MILITARY AUTHORIZATION TO OVERFLY AND REFUEL AT LAS PALMAS, CANARY ISLANDS, ENROUTE TO KINSHASA. BELGIANS EXPECT THE SPANISH CLEARANCE ANY HOUR NOW. VANDEN BLOOCK SAID THAT FAL AMMUNITION COMPRISES A PORTION OF THE TWO AIRCRAFT'S CARGO. BELGIANS WILL ADVISE US WHEN AIRCRAFT DEPART BELGIUM AND HAVE PROMISED TO GIVE US DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF CARGO, PRESUMABLY TOMORROW.

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2. VANDEN BLOOCK SAID BELGIAN GOVERNMENT RESPONDED POSITIVELY TO MOBUTU CHIEFLY TO GIVE HIM "PSYCHOLOGICAL BOOST" AND SHOW HIM HE CAN COUNT ON HIS FRIENDS IN A CRISIS. BELGIANS, HOWEVER, ARE NOT CONVINCED THAT GOZ IS NOT TRYING TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF SHABA SITUATION TO ACHIEVE LONG-RANGE ARMAMENT GOALS. THEY WILL LOOK AT THE MOBUTU SHOPPING LIST AND APPRAISE IT ON BASIS OF "REAL NEED LINKED TO REAL DANGER". BELGIAN MATERIAL WILL BE

PROVIDED TO ZAIRE ON COMMERCIAL, NOT GRANT OR LOAN BASIS, AND BELGIAN GOVERNMENT WILL NOT UNDERTAKE ANY PROGRAMS CALLING FOR OPERATIONAL TRAINING OF ZAIRE FORCES OR STATIONING OF ANY BELGIAN SUPPORT PERSONNEL THERE. BELGIAN GOVERNMENT LOOKS FORWARD TO CONTINUING CLOSE COOPERATION WITH US IN ANALYZING ZAIRE'S REAL NEEDS AND REAL DANGERS.

3. VANDEN BLOOCK SAID GOB IS CONCERNED OVER LACK OF HARD INFORMATION ON THE SIZE OF THE INVADING FORCE AND ITS ULTIMATE AIM. IF INVADERS ARE EX-KATANGA GENDARMES AND IF THEY STAY WITHIN THEIR LUNDA TRIBAL AREA, AS THEY HAVE TO DATE, BELGIANS SEE THE PROBLEM AS LOCAL AND MANAGEABLE. BUT IF OTHER THAN EX-KATANGA GENDARMES ARE INVOLVED AND IF THEY MOVE INLAND FROM THE TRADITIONAL LUNDA TRIBAL LANDS IN THE ANGOLA-ZAIRE FRONTIER REGION, THEN THIS IS A BIGGER OPERATION WITH SERIOUS IMPLICATIONS FOR KINSHASA AND INTERNATIONALLY. THE FACT THAT THE INVADERS ARE APPARENTLY STILL IN THE BORDER AREAS SIX DAYS AFTER THE INITIAL ATTACK DESPITE LITTLE OR NO OPPOSITION BY FAZ, SUGGESTS TO BELGIAN ANALYSTS THAT THE INCURSION SO FAR IS A LOCAL OPERATION WITH LIMITED AIMS.

4. THE BELGIANS HAVE NO INDEPENDENT CONFIRMATION OF ANY ARMED ENCOUNTER SO FAR BETWEEN INVADERS AND FAZ FORCES. THEY BELIEVE THE REPORTED BRIDGE-MINING INCIDENT MAY WELL HAVE BEEN AN FAZ TRUCK CONVOY ACCIDENT. THEY SPECULATE THAT MOBUTU HAS BEEN CAREFUL NOT TO ENGAGE HIS FORCES PRECIPITATELY FOR THE GOOD REASON THAT A MILITARY REVERSE WOULD BE FAR MORE DAMAGING TO HIM NOW THAN DOING NOTHING. BUT THE BELGIANS CONCEDE THAT A POLICY OF DIPLOMATIC ACTION AND MILITARY INACTION CANNOT BE SUSTAINED INDEFINITELY IF NO RESULTS ARE ACHIEVED. RENNER  
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## Message Attributes

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Margaret P. Grafeld  
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